

Homelessness Partnering Strategy Community Plan 2014–2019

Community: *Sydney Cape Breton*

Region: *Nova Scotia*

The plan has been approved by Canada for implementation.
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As this Designated Community's allocation is over \$200,000, it is required to commit at least 40% of its HPS allocation towards a Housing First approach starting April 1, 2016.

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Current Situation: Establishing your Baseline Data

Data

Please report on your current situation based on the following indicators. All CABs should review their progress annually against these indicators. This review will form part of the annual update. **Note: Although this data is not required at this time, data for 2013 will be required as part of the first annual update.**

1. Number of unique individuals who used an emergency homeless shelter in the twelve month period between January 1, 2012 and December 31, 2012	
2. Number of shelter users who were chronically homeless in 2012	
3. Number of shelter users who were episodically homelessness in 2012	
4. Number of homeless veterans who used an emergency homeless shelter in 2012.	
5. Estimated number of homeless veterans who were chronically or episodically homeless in 2012.	
6. Number of homeless individuals identified during the latest point in time count (if available)	
7. Date count was undertaken	

Readiness for Implementing Housing First

Please rate your community's readiness to implement Housing First based on the following questions. Each component of the scale has a rating of one to four

with four demonstrating full implementation of the HPS HF model. Use this information to decide where to focus your efforts in implementing your HF program. Because implementing Housing First may take some adjustments, communities will have the opportunity to rate progress annually and use the information to update priorities.

Note: Responses will only be used by ESDC to understand the selection of the HF priorities and activities.

Criterion	Community's Rating
CORE PRINCIPLES	
Rapid Housing with Supports. Program directly helps participants locate and secure permanent housing as rapidly as possible and assists them with moving-in or re-housing if needed.	-2-: Program supports participants in locating housing within 4-6 months and does not offer participants who have lost housing a new housing unit.
Housing Choice. Program participants choose the location and other features of their housing.	-3-: Participants have some choice in location and other features of their housing, including decorating and furnishing their unit.
Separating housing provision from other services. Extent to which program participants are not required to demonstrate housing readiness.	-3-: Participants have access to housing with minimal readiness requirements.
Integrated Housing. Extent to which housing tenure is assumed to be permanent housing with no actual or expected time limits, other than those defined under a standard lease or occupancy agreement.	-4-: Participants live in housing with landlord-tenant agreements and there are no time limits on housing tenure other than those defined under a standard lease or occupancy agreement.
Tenancy Rights and Responsibilities. Extent to which program participants have legal rights to the unit.	-2-: Participants have a written agreement (such as a lease or occupancy agreement), which specifies the rights and responsibilities of tenancy, but contains special provisions regarding adherence to treatment or other clinical provisions.
Reasonable Cost for Housing. Extent to which participants pay a reasonable amount of their income for housing costs and/or program has access to rent supplements or subsidized housing units.	-4-: Participants pay 30% or less of their income for housing costs and/or program has ready access to rent supplements or provides subsidized housing units for all participants.

Criterion	Community's Rating
Housing Support. Extent to which program offers services to help participants maintain housing, such as offering assistance with landlord relations and neighborhood orientation.	-3-: Program offers some ongoing housing support services but does not offer any property management services, assistance with rent payment, and co-signing of leases.
SERVICE PHILOSOPHY Service choice. Extent to which program participants choose the type, sequence, and intensity of services such as recovery, medical and other services.	-3-: Participants may have some say in choosing, modifying, or refusing services and supports, but program staff determinations usually prevail.
Participant-Driven Program & Services. Extent to which the program and services are participant-driven.	-2-: Program offers few opportunities for input on their individual services or more generally on program services.
Contact with Participants. Extent to which program maintains regular contact with participants.	-2-: Program meets with participants once every 4 to 8 weeks to ensure participants' safety and well-being.
Continuous Services. Extent to which program participants are not discharged from services even if they lose housing.	-4-: Participants continue to receive program services even if they lose housing.
Directly Offers or Brokers Services. Program directly offers or brokers support services to participants, such as recovery, medical and other services.	-2-: Program directly offers or brokers some services.
Selection of Vulnerable Populations. Extent to which program focuses on chronic and/or episodically homeless individuals.	-2-: Program has some method to identify chronic and/or episodically homeless.
TEAM STRUCTURE/HUMAN RESOURCES Low Participant/Staff Ratio. Extent to which program consistently maintains a low participant/staff ratio.	-1-: 50 or more participants per 1 FTE staff.

Community Advisory Board Membership

1. **Name of the Community Advisory Board:** Community Advisory Board (Cape Breton)
2. **Number of members in your CAB:** 11

Community Advisory Board Membership					
Last Name	First Name	TITLE ORGANIZATION	SECTOR(S)	Role on CAB	Include on Distribution List?
Vassallo	Peggy	Access 808	- Healthcare, including mental health and addictions treatment - Youth - Non-profit	Member	Yes
MacLeod	Arthena	Executive Director / Cape Breton Community Housing Association	- Housing and social housing	Co-chair	Yes
Hines	Stephen	Dept. Community Services – Housing Services	- Housing and social housing - Other: Government	Member	Yes
MacDonald	Byron	First Voice	- People with lived experience	Member	No
Campbell	Agnes	Program Coordinator / Cairdeil Place	- People with lived experience - Non-profit - Other: Adults with mental illness	Member	No
Doyle	Joy	Board Member / Cairdeil Place	- People with lived experience - Non-profit - Other: Adults with mental illness	Member	No
MacDonald	Cindy	Department of Community Services	- Other: Government	Member	Yes
Rossiter	Lynn	Housing Coordinator / CB District Health Authority	- Healthcare, including mental health and addictions treatment	Co-chair	Yes

Community Advisory Board Membership					
Last Name	First Name	TITLE ORGANIZATION	SECTOR(S)	Role on CAB	Include on Distribution List?
Bailey	Chris	Transition House	- People with lived experience - Non-profit - Other: Women fleeing abuse	Member	Yes
Clarke	Jim	Senior Development Officer / Service Canada	- Other: Government; technical advisor	Member	Yes
Theriault	Raylene	Every Woman's Centre / Almost Home	- Housing and social housing - People with lived experience - Non-profit - Other: Women	Chair	Yes

3. Given the requirement to allocate funding to the Housing First approach, which involves both housing and individual supports, are there any sectors or organizations the CAB needs to include and/or engage in the future to more fully represent your community? (for example, Provincial or Territorial representatives responsible for housing and/or mental health, landlord organizations, people with lived experience, police, corrections, health and health promotions (including the Health Authority), income supports, other funders, addictions treatment)

Yes

Please identify the sectors or organizations and describe how they will be engaged.

The CAB is seeking representation from the private sector (landlords). The CAB is seeking representation from the municipality to replace retiring member. The CAB plans to engage the First Nations population to seek a representative for the off-reserve Aboriginal population who is homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Planning and Reporting

Your Planning Process

1. Stakeholder Engagement

- a. Who and how did the CAB consult in your community as you prepared this Community Plan? Please include information about the approach you took and the extent of your consultations.**

The CBRM is an amalgamated municipality with broad geographic sprawl; a series of focus-groups were held in the communities of Glace Bay, Sydney, and North Sydney. It was important these meetings were accessible, and we felt this outreach could provide some insight on community-specific issues. Invitations to participate were sent via email through the CAB's current contact list, reaching municipal councilors, landlords, representatives from various organizations, institutions, and gov't agencies that assist individuals and families who are homeless or at risk. Public notice was distributed via social media, details and info about the meetings were provided via newspaper articles and radio public service announcements and interviews. Each meeting began with an information session about the CE, the CAB, the HPS designated priorities, and HF Principals. Most in attendance had previous knowledge of the CAB and CE, but some did not, so clarity was provided to set context. A facilitated discussion through each designated HPS priority gathered input from the stakeholders identified challenges, barriers, ideas, and needs; thus providing valuable information about what steps need to be taken to address homelessness in our communities. Additional focus groups were organized with specific organizations that expressed interest in sharing the process with their client base.

- b. How is the CAB working with the Aboriginal sector and/or local Aboriginal CAB to identify and implement Aboriginal homelessness priorities?**

The Aboriginal homeless population remains a concern for this CAB. Finding someone who can represent off-reserve First Nations continues to be a challenge, and the current knowledge of the off-reserve Aboriginal homeless population is limited. The CAB plans to strengthen communications with local Aboriginal CAB as well as Unama'ki College, and First Nations citizens and stakeholders to identify culturally relevant solutions to assisting off-reserve population who are homeless or at risk.

2. Other Related Strategies and Programs

- a. In this section, you will identify and describe the federal, provincial, territorial, or local strategies, programs (other than HPS) which fund activities in your community that you will access to support your Housing First and other homelessness effort.

How many have you identified? 7

Name of federal, provincial or territorial or local strategies and programs	Focus of strategy or program
Rental Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program	- Social housing
Rental Housing Preservation	- Social housing
The Youth Employment Strategy	- Employment - Income supports
Cape Breton Regional Municipality Sustainability fund	- Social housing - Healthcare - Social integration
Canadian Alternative Investment Cooperative	- Social housing - Social integration
Raise the Roof.org	- Education
Canada Post Community Foundation	- Education - Social integration

- b. Does your Province or Territory have a plan or strategic direction to address homelessness, poverty, housing, or another related issue?

Yes

How does your HPS Community Plan complement Provincial or Territorial direction in this area?

Partially aligns

Please explain.

Our HPS Community Plan reflects similar goals to the NS Provincial Housing Strategy (Spring 2013) and hope to utilize the Provincial resources indicated in their strategy when implementing our plan. We expect that HPS and

Housing First will align with Provincial Strategies going forward, to most effectively address the issues of homelessness in our community.

c. The Housing First approach requires access to a range of client supports. How will you engage (or how are you engaging) provincial or territorial programs to facilitate access to provincial/territorial services for Housing First clients?

For our community, the process of identifying the Housing First client has not been formalized, and the program delivery model not yet established. Our current goal is to focus on Housing First Readiness in the first two years of the community plan, through ongoing stakeholder engagement. We will examine provincial programs, focus on coordination and data collection to identify the homeless population more accurately, and strengthen our capacity to collaboratively serve the current population. We will continue to ensure no overlap or unnecessary duplication of services.

3. Community Contribution

As part of the eligibility for HPS Designated Community funding, each community must be able to demonstrate that it has mobilized funding partners to contribute to its homelessness efforts.

- **Your community must show that it can identify \$1 contributing to your homelessness efforts from other sources for every dollar in your Designated Community allocation.**
 - o **The community contribution can include funding from any partner other than HPS such as: governments (Federal, Provincial/Territorial or Municipal/Regional); public institutions, such as hospitals, schools or universities; aboriginal organizations; private sector organizations; and not-for-profit/charitable sector organizations, such as foundations or the United Way.**
 - o **If an organization is contributing (financial or in-kind) to more than one activity, you may combine all the amounts received and enter the information once.**
- **The Community Entity (CE) will be required to report annually on the actual amount received.**

You will be asked to provide this information during the annual update. At this time, we need information about your community contribution for 2014-2015.

- a. **How many funders have you identified? 0**
- b. **You have not identified a Community Contribution equal to or greater than your allocation, please describe your strategy for ensuring that for every dollar invested by the HPS, the community can identify at least one dollar from other sources.**

All RFP's published by the Community Entity will require the applicant to demonstrate potential additional sources of funding or in-kind support. A high priority for the 2014-2016 phase of the plan is to establish and strengthen partnerships within the community, and all proposals will be reviewed with a comprehensive,

coordinated perspective. Stronger partnerships mean better sharing of available resources through both diversified funding opportunities (ie charities able to seek foundation support, or sector-specific organizations able to access niche programs) and in-kind support (ie time, venue space, supplies, etc.) with consideration given to the Cape Breton economic climate.

Name of Funder	Type of Funder	Contact Information		Financial Contribution	Non-Financial Contribution	Total Contribution
		Contact Person	(E-mail or Phone Number)	(dollars)	(Estimate in Dollars)	(Dollars)
Total Community Contribution (dollars)						\$0
HPS Designated Communities Funding Stream allocation (dollars)						\$465,500

Reporting

The Community Advisory Board is expected to report to its funder (Employment and Social Development Canada), its stakeholders and the broader community on what it is doing and the progress the community is making in reducing homelessness.

The HPS was renewed with a commitment to using a Housing First approach and demonstrate reductions in homelessness. The collection of data and results will be critical to this change. As part of your community planning process, you will set priorities and select activities. Projects should lead to results that contribute to reductions in homelessness. The HPS has identified specific results that it will be collecting through Results Reporting, but the CAB and CE should also be working together to identify other results they would like to gather.

Your Priorities

Priorities	The percentage of your HPS Designated Community (DC) allocation that will be invested in this priority in:					Activities Selected	Targets for 2014-2015 Where a target is set at 0 it could be because: (1) The community will not be implementing the activities in 2014-2015. (2) The activities will lead to outcomes different from the ones identified in the targets.
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018		
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019		
To reduce homelessness through a Housing First (HF) approach*	5% DC	15 % DC	40 % DC	40 % DC	50 % DC	% of HF Funds by activity selected (Related to 2014-2015 only) • 95%: HF Readiness ‡ • 5%: Data, Tracking & Monitoring ‡‡	
To improve the self-sufficiency of homeless individuals and families and those at imminent risk of homelessness through individualized services[†]	20% DC	25% DC	15% DC	15% DC	15% DC	Connecting clients to income supports	0 people will increase their income or income stability.
						Life skills development (e.g. budgeting, cooking)	The HPS has not asked for targets related to this activity.
						Supports to improve client's social integration	The HPS has not asked for targets related to this activity.

Priorities	The percentage of your HPS Designated Community (DC) allocation that will be invested in this priority in:					Activities Selected	Targets for 2014-2015 Where a target is set at 0 it could be because: (1) The community will not be implementing the activities in 2014-2015. (2) The activities will lead to outcomes different from the ones identified in the targets.
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018		
	-	-	-	-	-		
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019		
						Housing loss prevention (only for individuals and families at imminent risk of homelessness)	0 people will remain housed at three months after receiving a housing loss prevention intervention.
						Liaise and refer to appropriate resources	The HPS has not asked for targets related to this activity.
						Basic or urgent needs services	The HPS has not asked for targets related to this activity.
To preserve or increase the capacity of facilities used to address the needs of people who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness.	30 % DC	25 % DC	20 % DC	20 % DC	15 % DC	Transitional housing facilities	1 new transitional housing units will be added to a new or existing housing unit.
						Supportive housing facilities	2 new permanent support housing units will be added to a new or existing housing unit.
						Emergency shelter facilities	1 new emergency shelter beds will be added to an existing emergency shelter.
						Non-residential facilities	The HPS has not asked for targets related to this activity.

Priorities	The percentage of your HPS Designated Community (DC) allocation that will be invested in this priority in:					Activities Selected	Targets for 2014-2015 Where a target is set at 0 it could be because: (1) The community will not be implementing the activities in 2014-2015. (2) The activities will lead to outcomes different from the ones identified in the targets.
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018		
	-	-	-	-	-		
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019		
To ensure coordination of resources and leveraging	20% DC	20% DC	15% DC	15% DC	15% DC	- Identifying, integrating and improving services (including staff training on activities and functions in support of a systems approach to homelessness) - Partnership and development in support of systems approach to homelessness - Working with the housing sector to identify opportunities for and barriers to permanent housing (e.g. establishing landlord relationships, mapping of current available assets) in support of a broader systematic approach to addressing homelessness - Consultation, coordination, planning, and assessment (e.g. community planning)	The HPS has not asked for targets related to these activities.

Priorities	The percentage of your HPS Designated Community (DC) allocation that will be invested in this priority in:					Activities Selected	Targets for 2014-2015 Where a target is set at 0 it could be because: (1) The community will not be implementing the activities in 2014-2015. (2) The activities will lead to outcomes different from the ones identified in the targets.
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018		
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019		
To improve data collection and use	25% DC	15% DC	10% DC	10% DC	5% DC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identifying the size and make-up of the entire homeless population - Tracking non-Housing First clients - Point-in-time counts - Community indicators (beyond the requirements for HPS) - Information collection and sharing (including implementing and using HIFIS) 	The HPS has not asked for targets related to these activities.

Notes:

- * **The Housing First model includes both housing and access to supports primarily for chronically and episodically homeless individuals. The services provided are offered through an integrated approach and are interdependent. Generally, the approach will be to ensure that Housing First clients have access to all the existing services required.**
- ‡ **Housing First readiness activities include:**
 - **Determining the Housing First model (e.g. consultation, coordination, planning, and assessment)**
 - **Identifying, integrating and improving services (including staff training on Housing First activities and functions)**
 - **Partnership development in support of a Housing First approach**

- Working with the housing sector to identify opportunities for and barriers to permanent housing (e.g. establishing landlord relationships, mapping of current available assets)

**** Data, tracking, and monitoring activities include:**

- Identifying the size and make-up of the chronically and episodically homeless population by accessing shelter data
- Tracking HF Clients

† These services are offered primarily to individuals who are homeless or imminently at risk that are not part of the Housing First program.

Results

With renewal, the HPS is increasing the focus on achieving results. All projects are expected to contribute to reducing or preventing homelessness and CABs and CEs should be working together to determine how they will measure project success. The HPS has identified a number of indicators it will be using to measure the success of the HPS at reducing and preventing homelessness.

Description of your Priorities

Housing First (HF) Priority

Rationale

Why is this a priority for your community? If the priority was identified in another related plan or planning process, please identify it.

Our community is entering Housing First for the first time, and will need the first phase (2014-2016) to prepare. Emphasis lies for the first formative years on Housing First Readiness: determining the model, partnership development in support of a Housing First Approach, and working with the housing sector to identify opportunities. We are not currently in a position where we can identify the model that would work best and further consultation or collaborative engagement is needed. By 2016 we should have a clearer perspective of our homeless and housing data in CBRM, we would have spent 2 years working collaboratively toward this approach and would be better equipped to identify at that point in time how Housing First would be implemented in our community.

What other resources can you leverage to contribute to your HF efforts?

- **HF Readiness**

Sam Tsemberis (Pathways to Housing) will be facilitating a Housing First Technical Training and Assistance workshop in conjunction with Mental Health Commission of Canada. We hope to establish and strengthen good working relationships with organizations and institutions over the course of the next four years. We will be seeking partnerships that could provide in-kind support via research, data collection, and/or contribution of space for meetings and focus groups.

- **Client Intake & Assessment**

None identified at this time

- **Connecting to and Maintaining Permanent Housing**

None identified at this time

- **Accessing Services**

None identified at this time

- **Data, Tracking & Monitoring**

We will be seeking partnerships that could provide in-kind support via research, data collection, and/or contribution of space for meetings and focus groups.

Description of the Housing First (HF) Approach

Please describe your Housing First approach, identify what percentage of your allocation will be used towards furnishing and repairing housing for HF purposes and provide a timeline for HF implementation.

Upon approval of the Community Plan, we will issue a Request for Proposals. As previously stated, our community is entering Housing First for the first time, and will need the first phase (2014-2016) to prepare. Part of the preparation process includes hosting a Housing First Technical Training and Assistance workshop with Sam Tsemberis. The CE and CAB applied to the Mental Health Commission of Canada for this opportunity to have one-on-one consultation and training, and was one of 18 communities selected. This is a valuable tool during this introductory phase of examining how we will implement Housing First in our community. The homeless population in CBRM is complex, with a large part of the population hidden and a limited capacity to provide individuals with emergency shelter. Thus, identifying the HF client via shelter data is a challenge. In addition, the HF model is new to our local organizations, which creates some uneasiness that can only be alleviated with education and training on the topic. From 2014-2016 the focus will not be on capital, but will be used toward determining the model, partnership development, working with the housing sector to identify opportunities, etc. We are not currently in a position where we can identify the model that would work best and further consultation or collaborative engagement is needed. By 2016 we expect to have a clearer understanding of what the chronically and episodically homeless population is, as well as what HF model will best fit our community, including what clients to target during 2016-2017 year wherein we've allocated 40% of the budget toward Housing First. The following timeline provides an example of how HF implementation fits into the community plan:

Stage 1 – 2014-2016

- Support existing service providers (shelter, life support programs, and liaison services to homeless or those at risk of homelessness)
- Focus on building partnerships & strengthening relationships
 - With private sector property owners and landlords
 - Between service providers
 - Between agencies, organizations, and government departments who are affected by or affect the homeless population
- Focus on the importance of data collection

- Seek consultation to help navigate through this complex issue – a customized, community-specific approach must grow from this.
- Focus on identifying the true size of the homeless population here
- Determine the Housing First model that seems most appropriate for this community

Stage 2 – 2016-2017

- Establish baseline data (having had two years to carefully examine and emphasize the importance of measurement and establish practical and effective methods of collecting data)
- Implement initial phase of Housing First
- Assess the needs for existing shelters and service providers

Stage 3 – 2017-2019

- Full implementation of Housing First
- Reassess municipal and Provincial resources
- Examine needs of non-HF clients

Target Group(s)

Please describe in more detail the group(s) this priority will address.

- Chronically homeless individuals
- Episodically homeless individuals

Individualized Services priorities

Rationale

Why is this a priority for your community? If the priority was identified in another related plan or planning process, please identify it.

Improving the self-sufficiency of homeless individuals is a continual priority, especially life skills development (budgeting, stretching the food bank order, parenting support skills classes etc.) Supports to improve clients' social integration and basic needs services are also an ongoing need.

Target Group(s) within the homeless and at imminent risk of homelessness populations

Please describe in more detail the group(s) this priority will address.

- General population
- Youth

Facilities priorities

Rationale

Why is this a priority for your community? If the priority was identified in another related plan or planning process, please identify it.

It is a major priority from 2014-2019 to preserve or increase the capacity of facilities in our community. Emergency shelter specifically for youth were identified as a particular need of focus. A lot of groundwork was achieved during the last plan with the implementation of youth support services, but more investment in this portion of the population is critical. Adult emergency shelters are currently operating with limited funding and are in need of support. Permanent supportive housing projects have shown great success in the past number of years, and there is an extended waiting list of individuals seeking access to a similar program.

Target Group(s) within the homeless and at imminent risk of homelessness populations

Please describe in more detail the group(s) this priority will address.

- General population
- Youth

Coordination of Resources and Leveraging Priority

Rationale

Why is this a priority for your community? If the priority was identified in another related plan or planning process, please identify it.

Ensuring the coordination of resources and leveraging is a high priority for our community because of the nature of homelessness here. The homeless population is complex, with a large part of the population hidden and a limited capacity to provide individuals with emergency shelter. Consultation would be useful in guiding the community through a collaborative approach to deal with the broader systemic issues. There are limited housing options available,

relationships with landlords and the private sector need to be strengthened, and a comprehensive approach is essential when trying to create opportunities for permanent housing. Coordination of any current efforts to map housing assets is an expressed need. The CAB will work with the province to examine the opportunities for funding for Housing Outreach Workers specific to Cape Breton.

Data Collection and Use Priority

Rationale

Why is this a priority for your community? If the priority was identified in another related plan or planning process, please identify it.

The current data available represents individuals who spent time in a shelter. Consultations with community stakeholders reveal that many homeless individuals stay with friends, acquaintances, family members, or in their vehicles. With few shelter beds available and a particularly limited capacity to serve youth, this does not necessarily reflect with accuracy what the homeless population is in the CBRM. With limited housing options available, and a variety of socioeconomic factors at play, measuring community indicators would be beneficial. A customized approach is required to identify the size and make-up of the homeless population here because it is not readily quantifiable. The statistics currently presented locally are a very conservative estimate, and anecdotal information suggests the number of homeless in our community is much higher than the shelter data currently collected.